



# Help create a more respectful Aotearoa for our workers

Overview for supporting organisations

ShopCare proudly acknowledges



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2025

# VAB customer campaign

## What's the problem?

Across New Zealand, our kaimahi/workers are experiencing increasing levels of rudeness, aggression, and violence from customers. While this behaviour shows up in different ways depending on the industry, the impact is the same: stress, burnout, mental health harm, and an overall decline in the wellbeing of the people who keep our country running.

This trend is costing New Zealand businesses and wider society millions of dollars every year through:

- Worker anxiety and poor mental health
- Physical injury or stress-related illness
- Sick leave and absenteeism
- Low staff morale
- Higher staff turnover
- Negative customer experience
- Reduced productivity and revenues
- Higher costs for consumers

Violent and aggressive behaviour (VAB) is not confined to one industry; it's a shared challenge for all organisations with public or customer-facing staff and can affect any worker across New Zealand.

Staff in retail, banking, telecommunications, government services, transport and many more are impacted. Whether face-to-face or via phone, this isn't the experience any of us want for our teams, or for our communities.

## It's time for change.

ShopCare is working on a national campaign, in partnership with Respect NZ, to unite organisations from the private sector, unions, and local and central Government to effect the positive change Aotearoa New Zealand needs.

**Our goal:** Reduce VAB for all workers, and promote respect in customer interactions.

## We're going to move the needle on respect. Here's how.

We have an opportunity to address this concerning decline in behaviour and the real costs it's placing on our workers and businesses. We want to bring back courtesy, respect, and compassion.

With Respect NZ and with the support of partner organisations, we are launching a focused nationwide project with two key components:



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## Phase 1: Find out the reality of VAB on our workers

### National survey (early 2026)

To create meaningful change, we first need to hear directly from New Zealand's public-facing workers across ALL sectors – what are their experiences of violent and aggressive behaviour (VAB) in their workplace?

An independent research company will run a national survey that will be sent to workers across New Zealand via participating organisations. The survey will:

- Create a baseline measurement of VAB exposure, which currently does not exist
- Capture how often VAB occurs and the types of harm, including:
  - Weapon-related aggression
  - Race-related aggression
  - Sexual harm-related aggression, etc.
- Provide a voice for workers to share solutions and suggestions to create positive change

We are engaging an external agency to deliver the survey on our behalf, to secure broad engagement, especially via government agencies and banks who may have restrictions on their staff use of external platforms. The survey findings will:

- Collect and share workers' real-life experiences so their stories and data can inform future interventions
- Inform the campaign creative positioning
- Potentially feature real stories in campaign material
- Provide evidence and insights that can be used in stakeholder engagement and media to raise awareness of the impact of VAB

## Phase 2: Educate Kiwis to treat our workers with respect

### Respect NZ customer education campaign (late 2026)

We're partnering with Respect NZ to deliver a broad reach nationwide customer education campaign to encourage Kiwis to treat workers respectfully.

Just as "Be a tidy Kiwi" became part of our national culture, Respect NZ wants to encourage mutual respect as a cornerstone value of New Zealand identity.

The survey findings will inform the messaging of the customer education campaign. With the support of a number of organisations across Aotearoa, we plan to shift public behaviour and effect positive change.

The customer campaign will:

- Clearly articulate the harm that violent and aggressive behaviour is causing to workers backed by credible research (the survey data findings)
- Launch a universal campaign tagline and toolkit that any organisation can adopt in their internal or customer-facing campaigns
- Amplify the education message via broad-reach media to raise awareness – TV, radio, PR
- Support organisations with collateral and online information that they can share with their customers
- Encourage customers to change how they interact with staff



# How you can show your support for the campaign

## 1. Join us as a Founding Partner today

We're inviting your organisation to become a Founding Partner in this campaign by donating \$5,000 in seed funding for the first year.

Join as a founding partner and you will:

- Be part of a united effort to improve safety and wellbeing for our customer-facing workers
- Show leadership on an issue that affects us all
- Make a tangible difference to our workers

In addition, your company logo will be published as a supporter across the campaign collateral. Early supporters will have prominence on our marketing materials to encourage quick commitment.

This funding will help us:

- Roll out the survey and gather insights from workers across industries
- Develop and test campaign messages and creative concepts
- Coordinate outreach and engagement with other sectors

As ShopCare is a registered charity, your investment in a better New Zealand is tax deductible.

Email [info@shopcare.org.nz](mailto:info@shopcare.org.nz) to register your interest.

## 2. Share the national survey (early 2026)

When the survey launches, your organisation can share the survey link with your workers and encourage them to share their experience. The survey will be anonymous – the supporting collateral will reassure them of confidentiality, to encourage genuine feedback.

## 3. Help educate customers with the campaign (end 2026)

Support the customer campaign by using the toolkit and campaign messages to educate your customers and reinforce respectful behaviours in your own organisation.

# Together, we can encourage respect for every worker, every day.

Every worker deserves to feel safe and respected at work. By standing together, we can help set a new standard of behaviour across Aotearoa.

## Interested?

We'd love to have your support. If you're interested in becoming a Founding Member and joining us on this journey, or you'd like to talk it through, please email [info@shopcare.org.nz](mailto:info@shopcare.org.nz).

[Join our community](#) so you get news once we launch the survey and national campaign. It's free.



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## FAQs

### **Why do we need a VAB awareness campaign?**

Kaimahi/workers across New Zealand are seeing rising levels of rudeness, aggression, and violence from customers. This campaign aims to address the issue at its roots by raising awareness, shifting customer behaviour, and giving workers a stronger voice.

### **Is this campaign focused only on retail?**

No, it includes all sectors with workers impacted by customer violence and aggression.

### **Who is involved in the campaign?**

Retailers, unions, government agencies, transporters and other sectors with workers who deal with customers or members of the public.

### **What are the benefits of becoming a Founding Partner?**

You'll be helping to launch the campaign, support your workforce, and show leadership on a national issue.

### **What will the funding be used for?**

To run a national survey, develop campaign messages, test these with key audiences, and coordinate outreach.

### **Will Founding Partners be involved in campaign development?**

We will have a Steering Group made up of founding partners who will provide strategic oversight of the campaign and ensure the messaging is on point.

### **What is the national VAB worker survey?**

The national VAB worker survey is independent research that will gather anonymous real experiences from workers across all sectors. The survey will help us understand how often VAB occurs, how it impacts workers, and what drives this behaviour.

### **Who can take part in the survey?**

Any organisation with public or customer-facing staff can participate by sharing the survey with their teams once it launches in early 2026. We encourage organisations from all industries to get involved so the findings represent the full picture across Aotearoa.

### **How will the survey results be used?**

The findings will guide the messaging for the nationwide customer education campaign. They'll also establish a baseline measurement of VAB exposure in New Zealand, which is something we currently don't have.



# Ngā mihi

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